

Submitted on 06/20/2015 9:36AM
Submitted values are:

Your Name: (b) (6)

Your Email: (b) (6)

Your Comments:

EPA Regulators:

The Willamette River (Portland Harbor) cleanup proposal is a disgrace to the Agency, and an insult to residents of Portland and the surrounding communities. It's plain from looking at the overview that the Agency has been heavily influenced by financial concerns (i.e. polluters and their lawyers lurking the halls of the Agency with fat checkbooks) and for a few dollars is quite happy to leave the Willamette River and its resident species to fend for themselves. That is a disgraceful turn of events, and it is important that the EPA recover its reputation by tossing this proposal in the dumpster and starting over.

The draft cleanup plan leaves far too much of the river contaminated. The proposal should recommend that at least 1,000 acres of polluted sediment be removed from the river. That is the only way to give local wildlife species a fighting chance to recover.

The draft cleanup plan relies too much on "monitored natural recovery," a "do nothing" strategy that leaves pollution in the river in the hopes that it will either be covered over or flushed downstream. Who's going to monitor? And what is the fall-back plan if the "do nothing" strategy does less "nothing" than expected?

The Cleanup Plan must result in the removal of the Fish Consumption Advisory so that eating fish from the Lower Willamette is just as safe as eating fish from anywhere else in the Willamette River System and this must occur within a 10-20 year time frame. Tens of thousands of salmon travel through the river on an annual basis -- having a radioactive cloud of debris spanning 10 miles of the river has hurt the salmon population, and remediation of that problem must begin.

Creating a toxic waste disposal dump in our river is not acceptable--toxic dredged sediments must be taken to an appropriate landfill. You don't take out your garbage by piling it in your back yard -- the truck comes and takes it away. Why should our river suffer a less dignified treatment?

Entities with liability for the pollution must be held accountable and pay for a comprehensive cleanup that will protect the health of our communities, our environment and our wildlife. If the companies are still in business, go after them for the money. If they have been bought, go after their new owners. If they are bankrupt, go after the assets of the board members and C-level executives. It's time the EPA started showing serial polluters that they can no longer get away with murder.

Modification of this proposal is not enough. The EPA needs to start from scratch, leaving industrial lobbyists and their checkbooks out in the hallway, and heeding the advice of the scientists and environmental experts who have the knowledge that will actually help to fix our river.

Thousands of Portland residents are going to be watching this process very closely; don't think you can half-ass this and have it slip by unnoticed. You're already receiving thousands of comments and phone calls-- our voices are only going to get louder and more vigilant unless the EPA steps up with a real solution to fix our river.

Most sincerely,

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

Portland, OR 97225